

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1458

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 06130

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, ET

SUBJECT: CROWN PRINCE' S HEALTH

1. ALAN CAMPBELL, ASST UNDER SECTY AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE WHO DEALS WITH SUB- SAHARAN AFRICA, HAS GIVEN US THE MOST VIVID ACCOUNT OF THE STATE OF CROWN PRINCE ASFA- WOSSEN' S HEALTH THAT WE HAVE HAD FROM ANY SOURCE. HE SAID THAT THE CP STILL CAN SPEAK ONLY A FEW PHRASES OF AMHARIC AND THESE WITH CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY. CAMPBELL ALSO SAID THAT THE CP CAN WALK ONLY SHORT DISTANCES WITH OBVIOUS PAIN, SUPPORTING HIMSELF WITH TWO CRUTCHES. HIS RIGHT LEG DRAGS AND HE IS UNABLE TO PUT ANY WEIGHT ON IT. HIS SPEECH DIFFICULTY AND THE TROUBLE WITH HIS RIGHT LEG ARE THE LEGACY OF A BLOOD CLOT IN THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS BRAIN WHICH WAS REMOVED BY SURGERY AFTER HE HAD MADE A PARTIAL RECOVERY FROM THE INITIAL EFFECTS OF HIS STROKE. ALTHOUGH CAMPBELL DID NOT SAY SO, IT WAS APPARENT THAT HE HAD RECEIVED HIS INFORMATION ON THE STATE OF THE CP' S HEALTH FROM THE BRITISH DOCTOR IN ATTENDANCE.

2. SPECULATING ON THE PRINCE' S FUTURE, CAMPBELL, WHO WAS UNTIL LATE LAST YEAR BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN ETHIOPIA, SAID THAT HE WAS FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT THE CP WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT EVEN THE LIMITED RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH HIS PRESENT POSITION ENTAILS. THESE INCLUDE MAKING PUBLIC APPEARANCES WHICH THE STATE OF HIS HEALTH WOULD

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SEEM TO PRECLUDE. CAMPBELL THOUGHT THAT IF THE CP WENT BACK TO ETHIOPIA HE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO RETIRE TO SOME COUNTRY RETREAT WHERE HE COULD BE VISITED BY FAMILY BUT WOULD BE OUT OF THE PUBLIC LIMELIGHT. EARLIER OPTIMISM EXPRESSED BY SOME OFFICIAL VISITORS WHO HAD SEEN THE CP, INCLUDING HIM DURING HIS VISIT IN LATE FEBRUARY, WERE BASED ON THE FACT THAT HE HAD RATHER MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVED AN ATTACK WHICH MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN FATAL. THE CP HAS LEFT THE HOSPITAL AND IS NOW LIVING IN A LONDON FLAT NOT FAR FROM THE AMERICAN EMBASSY ATTENDED BY SOME MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY. HE REMAINS UNDER STRICT MEDICAL OBSERVATION. ACCORDING TO CAMPBELL, THE EMPEROR MADE NO COMMENT ABOUT THE CP'S HEALTH AFTER HAVING SEEN HIM WHILE EN ROUTE TO WASHINGTON MAY 13-14. INCIDENTALLY, CAMPBELL ALSO SAID THAT THE EMPEROR'S LONDON STOPOVER HAD BEEN STRICTLY PRIVATE AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN BRITISH OFFICIALS AND HIM OR ANY MEMBERS OF THE ETHIOPIAN PARTY.

3. COMMENT: UNTIL NOW ALL OFFICIAL BRITISH SOURCES IN LONDON HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO GO INTO DETAIL ABOUT THE STATE OF THE CP'S HEALTH, CONFINING THEMSELVES TO SAYING THAT HE WAS PROGRESSING SLOWLY. CAMPBELL'S DESCRIPTION TALLIES CLOSELY WITH WHAT WE AND EMBASSY ADDIS ABABA HAVE HEARD FROM OTHER SOURCES AND WE BELIEVE IT CAN BE TAKEN AS AN ACCURATE LAYMAN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CP'S CURRENT CONDITION AND LIKELY PROSPECTS.

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